

Study on the Translation of Cultural-Loaded Words in Tales of Hulan River based on the Principles of Translation by A.F. Tytler

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Abstract

Whether cultural-loaded words are accurately translated is crucial for readers to correctly understand the author's thoughts and intentions. Translator Alexander Fraser Tytler put forward three principles of translation: content, style and expression. This paper, on the basis of the Principles of Translation by A.F. Tytler, takes the cultural-loaded words in Tales of Hulan River, Xiao Hong's masterpiece, and Goldblatt's English translation as the research object, and analyzes the translation of cultural-loaded words in the English version of Tales of Hulan River. This paper finds that different translation strategies should be adopted for different types of cultural-loaded words. For example, the combination of literal translation and incremental translation can be used for material and ecological cultural-loaded words, while free translation should be used for religious cultural-loaded words, and words with religious connotations should be avoided as far as possible. These translation strategies can help the translator convey the author's thoughts and emotions and make it easier for readers to understand.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Tales of Hulan River and its English translation

Xiao Hong completed the serialization of her novel Tales of Hulan River in Hong Kong's Sing Tao Daily in 1940. The novel depicts the folk customs, local culture, and traditions of Hulan County, a northeastern border region in the 1920s and 1930s. Folklore often carries the distinct essence of traditional Chinese culture, embodying unique practices that differentiate it from other ethnic groups, with profound cultural significance. The language in Tales of Hulan River is deeply rooted in local flavor and

cultural distinctiveness. Translating such elements into English requires careful consideration to preserve their regional and ethnic nuances. Tales of Hulan River has aroused great repercussion in China, but it can be recognized by people who love literature all over the world, thanks to the famous Sinologist Mr. Goldblatt. The 2002 English translation of Tales of Hulan River by Goldblatt has made a new leap over the previous version, both from the point of view of language and cultural communication. The translation of cultural-loaded words helps readers deeply understand the culture and context of the source language.

1.2 The Principles of Translation by A.F. Tytler

At the end of the 18th century, the English translator Alexander Fraser Tytler (1749-1814) systematically and comprehensively put forward three basic principles for the standard of "good translation" in his book on the Principles of Translation. The three principles of translation by A.F. Tytler are as follows: That the translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original work; That the style and manner of writing should be of the same character with that of the original; That the translation should have all the ease of original composition. In addition, Tytler believes that when there is a conflict, the importance of all three should gradually decrease. When translating literary works, in order to meet the three principles of translation by A.F. Tytler, translators can adopt such skills as adding translation, deleting, literal translation and free translation, so that the target readers can get the same aesthetic experience as the original readers. Tytler believes that good translation requires the translator to fully express the features of the original work in another language, so that the readers in the target country can have the same aesthetic experience as the readers of the original work when reading the translation, and can clearly feel and understand the original work.

1.3 Cultural-Loaded words

Translation is an important step to promote Chinese literature to the world, but the unique cultural vocabulary in literary works brings great challenges to translators. These cultural words unique to the source language are usually called "cultural-loaded words". These words occupy a very important position in the study of linguistics, translation studies and cross-cultural communication, because they not only carry rich cultural information and historical background, but also reflect the values, lifestyles and social structures of a nation. The cultural-loaded words in Chinese literary works carry the unique connotation and meaning of Chinese culture, and translators can only show their cultural essence by skillfully using translation skills. With appropriate translation strategies, cultural-loaded words

can become effective tools to promote cultural communication and understanding.

In order to better achieve the expected translation purpose, it is also crucial to classify the cultural-loaded words and adopt appropriate translation strategies to translate them. American scholar Eugene A. Nida classifies it into five categories: social, economic, political, cultural and religious. That is, based on Nida's classification, the cultural-loaded words in this study are divided into material, social, language, ecological and religious cultural-loaded words, and the translation of different kinds of cultural-loaded words is analyzed respectively. Material cultural-loaded words are closely related to people's lives, involving all aspects of clothing, food, housing and transportation, and also reflect the characteristics of material culture. The novel takes place in the rural area of the northeast border area in the 20th century, so most of the material cultural-loaded words involved in the story fit the rural family life at that time, and have distinct characteristics of the Northeast countryside. Social cultural-loaded words, as the name implies, refer to the customs, history, politics, art and other related words formed and influenced by human beings in social life for a long time, including appellation, occupation, customs and habits, etc., with strong epochal and national characteristics. Language cultural-loaded words reflect the linguistic characteristics of each nation, including the differences in grammar, phonetics and semantics. Chinese people will quote some allusions, four-character words, idioms and so on in their daily life. The ecological cultural-loaded words reflect that different regions have different ecological cultures, and the formation and development of culture is closely related to the matching ecological environment. The ecological cultural-loaded words in the book mainly include plant names, place names and natural meteorology. "Hulan River" is located in the rural area of northeast China, so there are a lot of agriculture-related descriptions in the book, and there are a lot of ecological and cultural load words related to plants. Religious cultural-loaded words mainly involve words related to religious belief, religious ceremony, religious

culture, etc. These words usually have a deep religious background and belief connotation. In old China, especially in the rural areas where the economy and culture were relatively backward, people often transferred their pain and maintained their hope and longing for the future through religion, so the words loaded with religious culture were more involved in the text.

II. ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL-LOADED WORDS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION BY TYTLER

2.1 The First Principle

Among Tytler's three principles of translation, the principle that "the translation should completely copy the original idea" is put in the first place, which shows its importance. In the process of translation, the translator should first abide by this principle, accurately understand and express the meaning and intention of the original author in the original work, and enable the reader to better understand the content of the article. This paper will divide cultural-loaded words into five categories: material, linguistic, social, ecological and religious cultural-loaded words, and analyze their translation with examples respectively.

2.1.1 Material cultural- loaded words

Example

1 : 等进了栈房，……伸手去拿热馒头的时候

Translation: After he has gone into his room at the inn,...he reaches out for a steamed bun...

Example2 : 卖豆腐的人清早起来沿着人

家去叫卖

Translation : The man who sells cakes of bean curd is up at dawn to go out among the people's homes and sell his product.

In Example 1, "热馒头" is a unique traditional food in China, carrying the food culture of the Chinese nation. "Bun" is a small round bread in Western food, which is similar to "热馒头" in appearance. "Steamed" not only

refers to the practice of "馒头", which is different from the practice of baking the Western bun, but also refers to the steaming of the "馒头", which corresponds to the Chinese word "hot". In Example 2, "豆腐" is also a food carrying unique national culture. "Bean" expresses the raw material of the food, "curd" writes its state, and "cakes of" explains that its shape is piece by piece. Here, the translator translates "热馒头" into "steamed bun" and "豆腐" into "cakes of bean curd", which is in accordance with the first principle of the three principles of translation by Tytler, and accurately explains the food that does not exist in the target culture, so that the readers can understand the meaning that the original author wants to express to the greatest extent.

Example

3: 那医生的门前，挂着很大的招牌，那招牌上画着特别大的有量米的斗那么大一排牙齿。

Translation: Above this dentist's door there hangs a large shingle on which is painted a row of oversized teeth about the size of a rice-measuring basket.

"量米的斗" is a tool used in rural areas of Northeast China to measure grain, mostly made of wood, and it is not found in other countries. "Basket" and "斗" are similar in function and shape, but the use of "basket" is more extensive, so "rice-measuring" is added for further explanation. This translation also complies with the principle that "the translation should completely rewrite the original author's thoughts".

2.1.2 Language cultural-loaded words

Example

1 : 布店门前挂了两张怕是自古亦有之的两张布幌子。

Translation : ...and hanging above the door of the dry goods shop are two curtains that are as old as the shop.

Example

2 : 这广告在这小城里边无乃太不相当

Translation : The advertisement is out of place in this small town

Classical Chinese is one of the important sources of modern Chinese literature and culture. "自古亦有之" has the language color of classical Chinese, its original meaning has existed since ancient times, and the "古" the author wants to express in Example 1 is the time when this cloth shop opened. Although the sentence pattern of "as old as the shop" does not correspond to the Chinese, it conveys the meaning of the author clearly and concisely. "无乃" also has a classical Chinese color, the original meaning means "isn't... Did you?" "It is a euphemistic rhetorical question. But combined with the context, we can confirm that this advertisement is very incompatible with this small city. Thus, in Example 2, the translator's use of the emotive word "hopelessly" is consonant with the "太". Example 1 and Example 2 all conform to the first principle of translation by Tytler.

Example

3 : 听说那火磨里边进去不得，那里边的消信可多了，是碰不得的

Translation : I've heard that no one is allowed to enter the fire mill, for there are a great many knobs and gadgets inside that must not be touched.

Example 4 : 你想龙王爷并不是白人呵！

Translation : Do you think that the Dragon King is someone who can easily be pushed around?

Dialect is a language different from Putonghua in a certain area. Dialect is an important embodiment of national culture and shoulders the responsibility of inheriting and developing local traditional culture. Dialects in different regions are very different, usually with local characteristics, and are quite different from Mandarin, which makes it difficult to translate. In Example 3, the word "消信" is a dialect of Northeast China, which refers to various organs set up by many skilled craftsmen. "knobs" means small, round devices for controlling a machine or electrical equipment, which are typical of an agency, A switch appears when a round button is turned or pressed. "gadgets" means small but ingenious tools or pieces of equipment. "机关" is often

small but fine, so the translation expresses the characteristics of "机关". Therefore, the translator has carefully considered and weighed the selection of words in the translation, and accurately extracted the typical examples and characteristics of "eliminating faith", and the translation conforms to the first principle of translation by Tytler. The "白人" in example 4 does not refer to the white race, but refers to the ordinary people with no culture and average level of knowledge in the Northeast dialect. But the literal translation of common people here makes no sense. According to the disrespectful behavior of some students to the Dragon Lord mentioned in the previous article, people suspect that it is the Dragon Lord's revenge and punishment, and the exclamation in the example sentence, understand that the original author wants to express that the Dragon Lord can not be bullied at will. Therefore, the translator's translation of "白人" as "someone who can easily be pushed around" is a complete copy of the original idea, which conforms to the first principle.

2.1.3 Social cultural-loaded words

Example

1 : 后来那女医生没有办法，大概是生活没法维持，她兼做了收生婆。

Translation : Eventually, most likely owing to her inability to make a living, she had no recourse but to engage in midwifery on the side.

In the old days, due to the backward economic level and poor medical conditions, most of the mothers would not choose to go to the hospital, but gave birth at home, which led to the birth of the "收生婆" who came to the home for the mothers. This kind of occupation has a strong contemporary and social nature. In Example 1, the translator translated "收生婆" as midwife who is trained to help women give birth to babies, which is in line with the author's intention and can be understood by the target language readers.

Example

2 : 若有人提起那件事来，差不多就像人们讲着岳飞、秦桧似的，久远得不知多少年前的事情似的。

Translation : they discussed it as they would the famous confrontation between the heroic general Yue Fei and the evil prime minister Qin Kuai, something that occurred in the long distant past.

"岳飞" and "秦桧" are famous historical figures in China. They are the representative characters of some historical stories and the symbol of cultural spirit. In this example, the translator first uses confrontation to explain the relationship between the two characters, and then adds and complements the images of "the heroic general" and "the evil prime minister". So that the target readers who have no knowledge of these two historical figures can easily understand the meaning that the original author wants to express, which conforms to the first principle.

2.1.4 Ecological cultural-loaded words

Example 1 : 买二两黄连

Translation : buy two ounces of an herb called gold thread

"黄连" is a famous Chinese herbal medicine that needs a specific ecological environment to grow. In this example sentence, the translator first used "herb" to indicate the type of "黄连", and translated it into "gold thread" by literal translation. Even if the target readers may not understand the meaning of "gold thread", they can know that this is the name of a kind of herbal medicine, which conforms to the first principle.

Example

2 : 花盆一盆一盆的摆在花架子上，石柱子、全百合、马蛇菜、九月菊都一齐的开了。

Translation : Flowerpots are arranged on the flower racks; there are cassias, pure-white lilies, purslanes, September mums, and all are in bloom.

There are several flower names in this example, and the names and types of flowers have special cultural colors. "石柱子" is the carnation flower, "全百合" means the pure white lily, "马蛇菜" is the purslane, and "九月菊" is the chrysanthemum in full bloom in September as

its name suggests. The translator here transliterates it as cassias, pure-white lilies, purslanes and September mums respectively, which can convey the purpose of the original author and conform to the first principle.

2.1.5 Religious cultural-loaded words

Example

1: 车夫从泥坑爬出来，弄得和个小鬼似的，满脸泥污

Translation: The carter climbs out of the quagmire, looking like a mud-spattered apparition

"小鬼" means ghosts, but that's what Buddhism says. In the translation, the translator chose a word corresponding to or similar to the religious belief that accounts for a large proportion of the target language readers: "apparition", so that most of the target language readers can understand the meaning that the original author wants to express.

Example

2: 所以就抓住了他的儿子来实行因果报应了。

Translation: So he grabbed hold of the son as a means of gaining retribution.

In Buddhist religious belief, people believe in the cycle of cause and effect. Everything people do has its cause and effect, and if they do something bad, they will suffer retribution. Retribution means severe punishment for something seriously wrong. It accurately expresses the idea of the original work without too much explanation of its religious color, which is easy for the target language readers to understand.

Example

3: 一上了学堂就天地人鬼神不分了。

Translation: since they quickly lost respect for everyone and everything.

Buddhists believe there are ghosts and gods in the world, ghosts live in hell, and gods live in heaven and monitor people's every move. The author's "天地人鬼神不分" in the example sentence is intended to express that the students do not believe that there are ghosts and gods in the world, and lack the fear of ghosts and gods. On the basis of accurately interpreting the intention of the original author, the translator paraphrased the sentence as lost respect for everyone and everything, without

forcing out religious elements, which is conducive to the understanding of the target language readers, but also completely copied the ideas of the original, which conforms to the first principle.

2.2 The Second Principle

The writing style and tone of different authors and different articles are not the same, some are colloquial, some are more formal, some are simple and simple, and some are gorgeous. The translator should maintain the same style and tone as the original text when translating, which is the second principle of translation by Tytler.

2.2.1 Social cultural-loaded words

Example

1: 都是在庙里边, 一个在龙王庙里, 一个在祖师庙里。两个都是小学

Translation: They are both located in temples—one in the Dragon King Temple and one in the Temple of the Patriarch—and both are elementary schools.

In the old days, people believed that there was a dragon king in charge of the sea. In order to bless the success of maritime transportation and fishing, people built and worshipped the "龙王庙". In order to bless the success of life, they built and worshipped the "祖师庙", which was a custom formed by people for the smooth social life. In this example sentence, the translator chooses a literal translation of "龙王庙" as "Dragon King Temple", and adopts a free translation of "祖师庙" as "Temple of the Patriarch" to keep the text as concise as the original text. The sentence pattern of "one in the...one in the" echoes "一个在...一个在", which corresponds to the second principle.

2.2.2 Material cultural- loaded words

Example

1: 一进了院, 正房五间, 厢房三间, 一律是青红砖瓦房, 窗明几净, 空气特别新鲜。

Translation: Just inside the courtyard is the principal house, with five main rooms and three side rooms, all topped with green- and red-brick tiles; the windows are clean, the furniture spot-less, and the air fresh as can be.

"院" is a traditional building in North China, with houses on all sides of a courtyard. "正房" is the house in the center, and "厢房" is the house on both sides in front of "正房". "青红砖瓦房" is an important architectural form of Chinese traditional residence, which is the carrier of Chinese traditional culture. In this example sentence, the translator does not overstate the cultural-loaded words, but does literal translation, so that the translation keeps the same simplicity as the original text, and uses short sentences as the original text, which is consistent with the style and tone of the original text, and conforms to the second principle.

2.3 The Third Principle

In the comparative study of Chinese and English languages, a prominent feature is that Chinese emphasizes parataxy and rarely uses connectives to connect sentences, but relies on the meanings between words to express grammatical and logical relations, while English emphasizes hypotaxis and is rigor structured and often uses connectives. Therefore, in order to make the translation as smooth as the original, the author can re-create the original sentence in an appropriate way on the basis of understanding the meaning of the original sentence, so that it conforms to the writing habits of the target language and the sentence is smooth and easy for the target language readers to understand.

2.3.1 Language cultural- loaded words

Example

1: 你三心二意的吃下去还会好。

Translation: If you'd just eat it and not give it another thought, everything would be fine.

"三心二意" belongs to a kind of language and cultural-loaded words: four-character words. Its original meaning is to describe hesitant or undetermined, but in the original novel, it describes that people always suspect it is pestilence when they eat cheap pork. In the translation of Example 2, the translator appropriately recreates the original text and adopts the method of respelling, changing the rhetorical question into a

declarative sentence, so that the target text is more in line with the expression habit of the target language and the reader can read it more smoothly.

Example

2 : 万里乾坤的"乾"和乾菜的"乾", 据这学生说是不同的。乾菜的"乾"应该这样写:"乾", 而不是那样写:"乾"。

Translation : He will smugly point out that the teacher has used the wrong character in a phrase he has written on the board.

The example relates to different ways of writing Chinese characters. Broad and profound, Chinese characters are the most crucial carrier of Chinese traditional culture, and it is difficult to translate them accurately. Here, the translator did not translate specific examples of Chinese characters, but generally translated them as "wrong character", which is easier for the readers of the target language to understand. Moreover, according to the situation, the translator used "smugly" to express the students' self-righteous and complacent state and the key implied by the original author. In this example sentence, the translator does not copy the writing ideas and sentence patterns of the original author, but re-creates the whole sentence on the basis of understanding, so that the translated sentence can be the same as the original text and conform to the third principle of translation by A.F. Tytler.

Example

3 : 晚饭时节, 吃了小葱蘸大酱就已经很可口了, 若外加上一块豆腐, 那真是锦上添花, 一定要多浪费两碗包米大云豆粥的。

Translation : At dinnertime some scallions and bean paste make for a tasty meal, but a piece of bean curd to go along with it adds a pleasant finishing touch, requiring at least two additional bowlfuls of corn-and-bean gruel.

"锦上添花" is also a four-character idiom in the language cultural-loaded words, describing something that makes something even better. "adds a pleasant finishing touch" is a common idiom used in the target language. In

this example sentence, the translator used this to make the readers immediately respond to the meaning of the author wants to express. Additionally, the translator changed the sentence structure, changing the hypothetical sentence "若...那真是锦上添花" to a declarative sentence "but...adds a pleasant finishing touch," which better aligns with the expression habits of the target language and makes the translation more fluent.

III. CONCLUSION

Cultural-loaded words play an important role in foreign communication and cultural communication. One of the important missions of contemporary translators is to tell Chinese stories and disseminate Chinese culture, in which improving the translation quality of cultural-loaded words is an important step for Chinese literature to go global. This paper analyzes and studies the translation of five types of cultural-loaded words in the English version of Tales of Hulan River under the guidance of the Principles of Translation by A.F. Tytler. It is found that Mr. Goldblatt often uses literal translation plus incremental translation to explain the meaning of words when translating material, social and ecological cultural-loaded words. When translating language cultural-loaded words, the meaning implied by the original author will be directly and clearly expressed according to the context. When translating religious cultural-loaded words, Mr. Goldblatt will try to avoid translating words with religious colors, but express the meaning intended by the author with other words and sentence patterns according to understanding. It is both faithful to the original text and easy for the target reader to understand. All of these are helpful to conform to the first principle of translation by Tytler, which is to completely reproduce the ideas of the original. At the same time, the translation should also conform to the style and tone of the original text in accordance with the second and third principles, and use appropriate re-creation to make the translation conform to the writing habits of the target language, smooth and natural.

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